

Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center

1900 Williams Street - P.O. Box 4789
 Helena, MT 59604-4789
 Telephone: (406) 841-3911 Fax: (406) 841-3965

Situation Report for Tuesday, July 22, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

I. - Background Information:

- The State of Montana has been experiencing an extended period of drought. Recently, the state has also suffered through a period of unseasonably hot weather. The combination of these two factors resulted in a significant increase in “initial attack” fire activity. Worsening fire/weather conditions and a lack of available resources are causing a dramatic increase in the percentage of new fires that escape “initial attack” efforts. Fire managers are predicting conditions that may rival those of 2000.

II. - Current Conditions:

- **Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 4** **National Preparedness Level = 4**
- Previous 24-hours: Light initial attack – 25 new fires for 48,786 acres
- Wedge Canyon – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman), 4,020 acres, 5% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.
- Missouri Breaks Complex - Type 2 Incident Management Team (Gray), 105,000 acres, 10% contained. This Complex is made up of the Big Coulee (21,000 acres), Ghost Coulee (1,000 acres – 100% contained), and Germaine (83,000 acres – burned together with Indian). Complex located 35 miles NW of Jordan, Montana.
- Big Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope), 745 acres, 0% contained, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana.
- Hidden Lake – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 650 acres, 0% contained, 30 miles W of Dillon, Montana.
- Slims – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Benes), 450 acres, 5% contained, 35 nautical miles E of Grangeville, Idaho.
- Long Mountain – 158 acres, 0% contained, 2 miles E of Neihart, Montana.
- Amethyst – 308 acres, 50% contained, 25 miles SE of Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming.
- Trapper Creek - 3,500 acres, 0% contained, 36 miles NE of Kalispell, MT. Wolf Gun/P. Bunyan – 800 acres, 0% contained, 40 miles NW of Kalispell, Montana. Fire Use Team (Cook) assigned to manage these incidents.
- Mickey Butte – 3,350 acres, 100% contained, 50 miles S of Malta, Montana.

- Weather Forecast

STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT
500 AM MDT TUE JUL 22 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Today - Sunny. Highs 94 To 104.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. Lows 52 To 62.

Wednesday - Mostly Sunny. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms...South.
 Highs 89 To 99.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Sunny. Highs In The Upper 80s To Upper 90s.

Tonight - Clear. Lows In The Mid 50s To Lower 60s.

Wednesday - Mostly Sunny. Highs 89 To 100.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Sunny. Highs In The Lower 80s To Mid 90s.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. Lows In The Upper 40s To Upper 50s.

Wednesday - Mostly Sunny. A Slight Chance Of Afternoon Showers And
 Thunderstorms. Highs In The Lower 80s To Mid 90s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny. Highs In The Upper 80s To Upper 90s.

Tonight - Mostly Clear. Lows In The Upper 50s To Upper 60s.

Wednesday - Mostly Sunny. A Chance Of Thunderstorms Northeast And Southwest.
 Highs 95 To 105.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

● <u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u>		<u>Date Filed</u>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Level I Fire Restrictions)	7/17/03

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declaration:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

Requests for State Assistance:

- Montana DES is supplying two individuals to Garfield County to serve as Agency Representatives, assisting with disaster recovery efforts.
- The Montana National Guard has been asked to assist "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 2 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters and approximately 20 people. One helicopter is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, and the other is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center. One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is operating at Activation Level III with extended hours (0700-1900 every day).
- The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1900-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.